

Claims

1 1. A method for managing e-mail attachment files received via a network e-mail
2 system by a user, comprising:

3 receiving at a client computer a first e-mail including a first attachment file from
4 said network e-mail system;

5 opening said first e-mail at said client computer;

6 comparing said first attachment file of said first e-mail with at least one existing
7 second attachment file associated with a second e-mail file;

8 determining whether said first attachment file is another incidence of said second
9 attachment file;

10 replacing said first attachment file with an identification which points to said
11 second attachment file when said first attachment file is another incidence of
12 said second attachment file;

13 attaching a reference tag to said second attachment file indicating a file system
14 location of said second attachment file;

15 searching for a third e-mail file being a next earliest dated incidence of said
16 second e-mail file when deleting said second e-mail file;

17 moving and attaching said second attachment file to a third e-mail file being said
18 next earliest dated incidence of said second e-mail file after said second e-mail
19 file is deleted; and

20 saving said first attachment file of said first e-mail file when said first attachment
21 file is not another incidence of said second attachment file.

1 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising after opening said first e-mail file,
2 selecting from an option menu to proceed with the remainder of the steps of said
3 method for managing e-mail attachment files.

1 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising after said moving and attaching said
2 second attachment file, deleting said second attachment file after not finding said third
3 e-mail file being said next earliest dated incidence of said second e-mail file.

1 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising before receiving at a client
2 computer a first e-mail, selecting at least one option from a menu displayed at said
3 client computer.

1 5. The method of claim 4 wherein said menu includes a first option which
2 includes saving all attachments.

1 6. The method of claim 4 wherein said menu includes a second option which
2 includes automatically proceeding to the step of replacing said first attachment file
3 with an identification which points to said second attachment file when said first
4 attachment file is another incidence of said second attachment file, and said first
5 attachment file is greater than about 0.5 MB.

1 7. The method of claim 1 further comprising after determining whether said first
2 attachment file is another incidence, authorizing at said client computer saving and
3 deleting first and second attachment files, and replacing said first and second
4 attachment files with said identification.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of opening said first e-mail includes,
2 automatically proceeding with the remainder of the steps in said method for managing
3 e-mail attachment files.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of comparing said first attachment file
2 includes, evaluating a date, a file name, and a file size for both said first attachment
3 file and said second attachment file.

1 10. The method of claim 1 wherein the steps are performed in the sequence
2 provided.

1 11. The method of claim 1 further comprising after said step of searching for a
2 third e-mail file, selecting from a menu to proceed to the next sequential step.

1 12. A method for managing e-mail attachment files received via a network e-mail
2 system by a user, comprising:

3 selecting an option from an option menu at said client computer;
4 receiving at a client computer, a first e-mail including a first attachment file from
5 said network e-mail system;
6 opening said first e-mail from said client computer;
7 searching automatically for a second attachment file included with a second e-mail
8 file after said opening said first e-mail;
9 comparing said first attachment file with said second attachment file;
10 determining whether said first attachment file is another incidence of said second
11 attachment file;
12 replacing said first attachment file with an identification which points to said
13 second attachment file when said first attachment file is another incidence of
14 said second attachment file;
15 attaching a reference tag to said second attachment file indicating a file system
16 location of said second attachment file;
17 searching for a third e-mail file being a next earliest dated incidence of said
18 second e-mail when deleting said second e-mail file;
19 moving and attaching said second attachment file to said third e-mail file after
20 finding said third e-mail file being said next earliest dated incidence of said
21 second e-mail file, after said second e-mail file is deleted; and

22 saving said first attachment file included with said first e-mail file when said first
23 attachment file is not another incidence of said second attachment file.

1 13. The method of claim 12 further comprising after said step of opening said first
2 e-mail, selecting from said option menu to proceed with the remainder of the steps of
3 said method for managing e-mail attachment files.

1 14. The method of claim 12 further comprising after said step of moving and
2 attaching said second attachment file, deleting said second attachment file after not
3 finding said third e-mail file being a next earliest dated incidence of said second e-
4 mail file.

1 15. The method of claim 12 further comprising after determining whether said first
2 attachment file is another incidence, authorizing at said client computer saving and
3 deleting first and second attachment files and replacing said first and second
4 attachment files with said identification.

1 16. The method of claim 12 wherein opening said first e-mail automatically
2 initiates proceeding with the remainder of the steps in said method for managing e-
3 mail attachment files.

1 17. The method of claim 12 wherein the steps are performed in the sequence
2 provided.

1 18. The method of claim 12 further comprising after said step of searching for a
2 third e-mail file, selecting from an option menu to proceed to said next sequential step
3 after finding said third e-mail file.